

STANDARDS COMMITTEE14 October 2009
(6.00pm – 6.30pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Bick, Dryden, McGovern, McPherson and Stuart
External Members: Dr Clark (Chair), Mr A Dasgupta,

FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**09/s/19 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 JUNE 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

09/s/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Taylor and external member Mr M Williams

09/s/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Agenda item	Interest
None		

09/s/22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public were present.

09/s/23 ANNUAL RETURN TO STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND

To date, a negative response has been made in a number of areas on the return and it was agreed that a negative return not a problem as this indicates no areas of concern and therefore nothing to report. However, it was agreed that the return offers a good opportunity to report positive work of the Standards Committee.

The Committee went through the report point by point as per the agenda:

1. An Annual Report on the work of the Standards Committee was agreed to be a good idea. This will be brought to the March 2010 meeting.
2. The Chair has not met the Chief Executive in the last months to discuss ethical issues but would insist on such a meeting if the need arose.
3. Likewise, the Chair has not met the Leader of the Council in the last months but would insist on such a meeting if the need arose.
- 4, 5 & 6. These are not needed at present but could be arranged if circumstances changed.
7. It was agreed that a feedback process to measure satisfaction with the member misconduct complaint process, rather than any action taken, would be useful. The Monitoring Officer will develop this.
8. Member/member or member/officer disputes are currently not an issue.
9. Members interests are now available via the website.
10. There is a Code of Conduct for officers but nothing specifically for senior officers. Central government is looking into this.
- 11 & 12 The Monitoring officer will look into establishing and publishing a register of senior officers interests, gifts and hospitality and will report back. It was agreed that publishing officers addresses would not be a good idea. The officer, responding to member's questions, stated that some of this information is currently available for them to inspect on a 'need to know ' basis.

Members discussed the Ethical Governance Toolkit and Annual Return (Appendix one to the report). However, without further information on costs they were unable to reach a decision on this.

Resolved:

- The Monitoring Officer will produce an annual report of the activities of the last Standards Committee of the municipal year.
- To develop a methodology for assessing satisfaction with the process of handling misconduct complaints.
- To investigate how other authorities publish information on senior officers and to report this back to committee.

09/s/24 APPOINTMENT TO ASSESSMENT SUB COMMITTEES

Resolved:

1. The composition of Assessment Sub-Committees was agreed as follow:

Assessment/Review Sub-committee A	Assessment/Review Sub-committee B	Assessment/Review Sub-committee C
Chair: Dr Clark	Chair: Mr Dasgupta	Chair: Mr Williams

Members: Councillors Bick and Dryden	Members: Councillors McGovern and McPherson	Members: Councillors Stuart and Taylor
--	--	---

2. Ideally the Sub-Committees would be called on as a group. However, members are authorised to sit as alternates should availability prove a problem.

09/s/25 DISPENSATION REGULATIONS

The committee considered the Standard's Board guidance document. Members were concerned that delegating the dispensations function to sub-committees would be problematic. It would be difficult to ensure a political balance. The committee considered a sub group consisting of the external members but rejected this idea. It was agreed that a Standards Committee could be called at short notice to consider dispensations if the need arose. However, this might mean that other committee would have to defer some issues until the Standards Committee have had the opportunity to consider the request for a dispensation.

Resolved:

Requests for dispensations will be considered by the Standards Committee as a whole and not delegated to 'local filter' sub-committees.

Meeting ended at 6.30 pm

Chair